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ABSTRACT

This quarterly publication seeks to gather the most current speculation on competency based education, its philosophical basis, and problems involved in its effective implementation. This issue presents the thoughts of five educators in the field. Parsons examines the notion of competence and competency as educational objectives, stressing the concept of specificity in stating educational objectives. Too general a statement provides little in the way of guides for program construction, teaching methodology, or evaluation criteria. Too detailed an objective results in reductionism. Miller in his article examines an Arizona competency assessment project designed to determine specific skills that administrators of community education programs need to be effective leaders. Greenfield presents a schematic representation relating on-the-job learning to graduate training in administration in an attempt to improve upon previously published administrator training program models. Larson and Erlandson examine the concept of competency based education and, on the basis of their understandings of the way the concept should and does function, present their reasons respectively in favor of and against the movement. (MB)

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CCBC Notebook
The Competency Based Curriculum

No. 2, Vol. 6, February 1977

Requests for back issues of the Notebook and inquiries of various kinds have increased significantly over the past months. In addition to the United States we have heard from Germany, Ireland, Turkey, Brazil, Taiwan and several Latin countries. Likewise, the volume of articles continues to increase so the decision was made to eliminate the Notes of Interest section in this issue and cut the editorial to a brief comment as a follow-up of Dave Erlandson's editorial of the Fall issue. The Notes of Interest section will resume in the Spring issue; so continue to send materials and announcements.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

RESPONSE TO A CHANGE OF NOTEBOOK FORMAT

Dave Erlandson in an editorial in the last issue of the Notebook raised several questions about the future of the Interest Group of NCPEA and the orientation and format of the Notebook. To this point only a few responses (eleven or twelve) in the form of notes or telephone comments have been received, and those that have responded have indicated a desire to see the Notebook and the Interest Group continue as is with perhaps a broadened program orientation. The Notebook invites anyone with a definite point of view to contact us. Robert Larson, University of Vermont, is the newly elected chairman of the Interest Group. The Spring issue of the Notebook will report projected plans for the Interest Group for the August 1977 meeting; so contact Bob Larson or the Editors with your suggestions. --Lloyd E. McCleary.

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THE NOTION OF COMPETENCE AND COMPETENCY AS EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Michael J. Parsons, University of Utah

The following is an attempt to state an understanding of the notion of a competency as an educational objective. A competency is seen as the ability to use a concept or theory as a tool for some purpose; it is distinguished from the more general ability to judge which tool is best to use for a given purpose.

SPECIFICITY

Consider the following pairs of statements of possible educational objectives:

A_1 to understand electricity

B_1 to repair a radio

A_2 be able to help teachers improve their teaching

B_2 to analyze a lesson

We all recognize A. in each case to be undesirably general and B. in each case to be somewhat better. There are two reasons why generality in educational objectives is undesirable, and why its opposite, specificity, is desirable. The more general, the less the statement can serve:

1) as a guide to program construction or teaching methodology;

2) as a criterion for evaluation. The ideal situation for testing is often thought to be where there is little reliance on subjective judgments of quality and where the results are an obvious yes or an obvious no. Note that judgment is still called for here, as to whether the radio has been repaired, or the lesson analyzed. It is the need to interpret a very general statement has has been eliminated.

BEHAVIOR AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The two 'B' statements above are not statements of behaviors. They might best be called 'achievement' statements (Gilbert Ryle). That is to say, they denote successes (this is why they require a judgment of quality), but they do not specify what must be done to bring about the success. Or one might say: they identify a purpose or task, but not the procedure required. Though better than the 'A' statements, they are not yet satisfactory.

Consider the following, as attempts to improve the statements:

B_1 to repair a radio

C_1 to solder together two wires

B_2 to analyze a lesson

C_2 to count the number of times a teacher asks the student a question

In both cases, the 'C' statement identifies a behavior. In both cases, they are more specific, and in both cases look as though they would serve as clearer guides to teaching or testing.

However, they are not ideal as statements of educational objectives. One way to explain this is to say that they are too specific. How many different such behaviors might be necessary to repair a radio? One might have to wire a transformer, replace a tube, adjust a tuner--And how many kinds of items might one count in a lesson? and how many kinds of things might one do besides counting?

The result is that to deal with behavioral objectives like this seems to require that one forecast in advance exactly and exhaustively what is to be done in any case of repairing, or analyzing. This makes for inflexibility, and inconvenience. In addition, specificity like this results in a reductionist tendency, whereby one mentions only behaviors belonging to the lower levels of the cognitive range. Whether this is necessary or not is not clear (Ira Steinberg). But it is at least an open question whether all of the intellectual abilities that are educationally desirable can be stated in behavioral terms.

This situation (the need to state a great mutliplicity of behaviors) has also led to confusion among the 'behavioral objectives' advocates. Mager, for example, lists B_1 (repair a radio) as an example of a 'behavioral objective'! Yet it is clearly an achievement which might require any combination of many behaviors to reach--depending on what is wrong with the radio.

Another way of putting this objection is to point out that statements C_1 and C_2 are not themselves educationally valuable. Counting questions, for example, is itself not worthwhile unless it is done with some aim in mind. It may, and may not, be part of analyzing a lesson. If it is not, it is not worthwhile, and yet behaviorally it does not differ from the meaningful case. And this, it will be noticed, becomes more obvious as one ascends the scale of worthwhile intellectual abilities. This is the result of isolating the item from the context of some meaningful use. Statements of purposeless behaviors cannot be educationally valuable because they do not call for intelligence.

COMPETENCIES

Consider now the following pairs:

B_1 to repair a radio

D_1 to use a voltmeter on a radio circuit to trace a fault

B_2 to analyze a lesson

D_2 To use the B. O. Smith logical interaction analysis technique to analyze a lesson

Both 'D' statements I would like to call statements of competencies. The crucial thing about them is that they both identify a particular tool and an achievement for which it is to be used. This means that one can be as specific as one wants to be, with regard both to the tool and the conditions in which it is to be used. On the other hand, one does not have to specify in detail the behaviors required and which vary from circumstance to circumstance.

Another way to say this is to point out that the notion of a 'tool' picks out exactly what is educationally valuable. The use of a 'tool', for example, transfers easily from one situation to another. This is because it requires a conceptual component. One understands something as a tool only when one knows the kind of achievements it can be used to reach, and how it works.

To use a soldering iron as a tool implies understanding the purpose involved, which means understanding something about the flow of electricity. This is exactly what the notion of 'behavior' omits, and 'tool' points up. Similarly, concepts by themselves may be tools, and in most professional areas will constitute the important repertoire to be acquired. Thus, the various kinds of schemes for classroom interaction analysis are basic tools for supervisors, and consist of concepts, or sets of concepts. And one might add that one understands a concept only insofar as one sees in what ways and for what purposes it can be used (Dewey).

KINDS OF COMPETENCIES

It would be possible, then, to rewrite a curriculum in terms of competencies by identifying the concepts one wants to teach and the kind of achievements the learner should be able to use them as tools for.

In an area like educational administration, it seems plausible to divide the tools into technical, social and personal ones. The B. O. Smith analysis would be a technical (conceptual) tool - i.e., one useful chiefly to supervisors, principals, etc. The concept of social class is an example of a more general tool, that might well be used by educators. The last category applies to human interaction, where there are perhaps fewer, yet very important, distinct tools. An example might be the notion of ego-defense, which may be used in thinking about the behavior of others or of oneself. Example:

Technical	D_2	to use the B. O. Smith logical interaction technique to analyze a lesson
General	D_3	to use the notion of social class to analyze a conflict in goals between parents and teachers in a school

Human	D_4	to use the notion of ego-defense to describe one's own attitude to the breach of school rules

These categories of kinds of competencies, and the next of levels, are a reworking of the model of McCleary, devised for immediate practical rather than theoretical purposes.

LEVELS OF COMPETENCE

So far competence has been described as the ability actually to use a concept or theory for some purposes. This is what might be called the level of application. There is both an earlier and later possible. The earlier is the level of familiarity, where the student knows about the tool in a general way, and the uses to which it may be put; but cannot necessarily use it for specific purposes. This kind of competence is often what is necessary for an administrator, and requires less in the way of detail or technical mastery.

The major deficiency of a program organized along these lines, however, lies in its ignoring the question of judgment. Competencies like these are possible to evaluate easily because they are abstracted from the complexity of 'normal' situations. Furthermore, the attention of the student in learning, and the teacher in evaluating, is on the correct understanding or use of a specific tool. This is the virtue of the system. But it means that attention is not on questions of the selection of tools in particular cases; in other words, one is not concerned with the question whether their use is wise or intelligent. To raise that question is to bring back the need for. . .subjective judgments of quality, which the statements of competency diminished. However, it is not desirable in professional programs to omit questions of judgment. Therefore, it appears that one needs also to present learners with molar, complex problems, in order to raise the question which tools should be chosen. The advantage is to have separated clearly between these two kinds of competence: in the use of a tool, and in the choice of a tool. In a sense, the latter is more important than the former, but depends upon it.

Another way to put this last point is to say that being able to use a tool wisely (as opposed to just being able to use it) involves some understanding of its limitations, its compatibility or incompatibility with other tools, its relationship to purposes other than the one it is designed to serve, and so on. It is, therefore, a more critical, theoretical and flexible level of attainment; and perhaps for this reason it cannot be called properly <u>a level</u>. However, it is certainly something different from the previous levels, which yet builds on them. Therefore, we can represent it schematically as in the following, which may be of use in curriculum planning.

The model presented on the following page and the rationale upon which it is constructed might aid to clarify some of the misconceptions about the competency concept and aid in a more rational approach to identifying competencies to be employed in curriculum development.

	TECHNICAL	GENERAL	PERSONAL
FAMILIARITY			
APPLICATION			
JUDGMENT			

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

A PROJECT TO ASSESS NEEDED COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Brian Miller, Arizona State University

(The Southwest Regional Center for Community Education Development at Arizona State University has been awarded a USOE grant to assess needed competencies in developing and administering Community Education programs. The funding is being made available through the Community Education Act of 1974. The primary thrust of this competency assessment project is to determine the specific skills and related competencies administrators of Community Education programs need to be effective leaders. --Ed.)

Community Education programs have grown rapidly in the past decade. Presently, there are approximately 3,500 Community Education programs, and approximately 1,800 Community Education directors and coordinators in the United States. Although there is considerable data in the literature on needed competencies in school administration, little work has been directed at determining what skills are germane to those engaged specifically in the administration of Community Education programs. Questions remain unanswered regarding needed competencies in Community Education administration in terms of the roles of superintendent, district coordinator, principal, and building level coordinator.

The Concept of Community Education

An examination of the following statement on Community Education, issued by the Arizona Department of Education Task Force in 1976, is indicative of the broad scope of tasks met and competencies needed by administrators of Community Education programs.

"The purpose of the community school is the involvement of people in the development of an educationally-oriented community. Ideally, the community school serves the purposes of academic and skill development for youth and adults; it furnishes meeting places for community groups; and it provides facilities for the dissemination of a variety of services, thus making life-long learning opportunity a reality.

The cornerstone of Community Education is increased community involvement and participation in the educational offerings of the local school. The community school responds to the self-defined needs of the total community and is based upon the belief that, given the opportunity to make fuller use of their schools, people will work together to improve those schools."

The increased scope and breadth of competencies needed in the administration of community education programs is further illustrated by the elements and components of a fully implemented program, also stated by the 1976 Task Force in the March, 1976, position paper:

Element: Educational Institutional Involvement

1. Position Paper: A position paper should be adopted by the governing board of the institution during the early stages of planning for a community education program. The position paper would address the degree of commitment of the educational institution, and provide the basic philosophy of the program.

2. Policies: The governing board of the institution should adopt policies supportive of the community education program. Examples of policy topics which the governing board might consider are uses of facilities and equipment, hours of program operation, and fiscal support.

3. Support: The sources and extent of institutional fiscal support should be clearly established for use by those charged with the primary responsibility for administering the community education program.

4. Administrative Structure: The primary administrator of the institution should define the relationship of community education in the administrative structure.

5. Administrative Leadership: Administrative leadership responsibilities for community education should be incorporated into an appropriate administrative job description.

6. Staff Involvement: The institutional staff's responsibilities toward community education should be addressed and clearly defined.

7. Feedback Procedure: A system should be established to provide the data needed to make infomred program decisions.

Element: Community to be Served

Community Education should serve the total educational needs of the community.

8. Geographic Boundary: The physical boundaries of the geographic area which the program is designed to serve should be designated.

9. Demographic Study: The populations which exist in the community should be described on the basis of factors such as age, sex, ethnic heritage, standard of living, and education.

10. Special Groups: Many special groups exist and should be identified so that their needs can be addressed. These include but are not limited to: the handicapped, the illiterate, the non-English speaking, the unemployed, the widowed, the gifted, those seeking job upgrading, etc.

Element: Community Education Council

The purpose of the council is to provide for the active and continuous involvement of individuals, groups, and institutions broadly representative of the community served.

11. Composition: Membership should reflect a cross-section of all segments of the population of the community served, including representatives of agencies, business and industry, education, and the community-at-large. A set of by-laws or a written agreement with the board of education is essential.

12. Functions

The functions of a Community Education Council are:

: To identify and analyze community concerns.

: To advise and recommend program activities and services.

: To assist with program tasks such as disseminating program information, locating resources, registration, screening personnel, etc.

: To review program results as related to identified community concerns.

Element: Community Needs

13. Identification: The program should provide a systematic procedure for identifying community needs, interests, and concerns. The method should include a procedure for obtaining information from institutions, groups, and individuals such as educational institutions, social, recreational, health and business/industry groups, and individuals broadly representative of the community served.

14. Communication: The program would provide an effective method for communicating the information on community needs, interests, and concerns to key decision makers and to the public at large.

15. Evaluation: The program should provide a method for obtaining and reporting the information required to determine if the program activities and services are effectively addressing the identified community needs.

Element: Interagency Cooperation

Community Education should promote, encourage, and facilitate interagency cooperation. Through this coordination and cooperation the programs and services

available in the community can be focused on the identified needs. The ultimate goal of interagency cooperation is to increase and improve services to the community.

16. Coordinating Council: The purpose of this council is to bring together the community agencies, educational institutions, and organizations providing services in the community education program to facilitate cooperation. Some of the council's functions are: 1) to discuss matters relating to the joint operation and coordination of the program, 2) to encourage member agencies and organizations to formulate their own policies and guidelines in relation to the community education program, 3) to identify and resolve areas of concern.

17. Joint Use Agreements: Joint Use Agreements are formal written documents between cooperating agencies and institutions relating to the use of resources. The agreements describe details of intent, insurance, liability, program, facility and equipment use, etc.

18. Public Relations: Joint public relations efforts should be established to publicize the community education program, agency services and community resources.

19. Cooperative Facility Planning: Public facilities should be jointly planned to reduce cost, avoid duplication and maximize use. Further, community education encourages agency/organization facilities to be cooperatively planned.

20. Joint Funding: Community education should enable and encourage joint funding of program activities and services.

Element: Identification of Community Resources

21. Physical: Physical resources including: buildings, land, and equipment that might be utilized in the program.

22. Fiscal: Fiscal resources including: budget allocations, fees, donations, grants, etc., which could be used in the program process of community education.

23. Human: Human resources including: school, agency, business, organization personnel, and community members.

24. Services: Services resources including: social, health, recreational, cultural, enrichment, educational, which exist in the community.

Element: Public Facility as a Community Education Center

25. Primary Facility: Program services for the community should be concentrated in a specific public facility. Program should provide access to public school facilities.

26. Satellite Facility: Satellite or mobile facilities may be used by the center for a portion of the program activities and services. These facilities may be non-public.

Element: Scope of Activities and Services

27. Basic Community Education Program Activities: Community education program activities are based upon the needs identified in each community. A balanced program contains such activities as: enrichment courses, recreation and leisure activities, vocational training, socially oriented activities, cultural events, and academic skills development.

28. Basic Community Education Program Services: The basic community education program should make provisions for social and health agencies to provide services in the community education facilities.

29. Topics of Contemporary Interest and Future Concern: Community education should provide for the awareness, discussion, and analysis of topics of contemporary interest and future concern such as: multi-cultural appreciation, preparation for technical change, futurism, the political process, current issues, environmental awareness, and consumer protection.

Plan of the Project

Sixty-eight administrators, representing 17 school districts in Arizona, participated in the study. From each of these 17 districts, a team of four or more administrators of Community Education programs were invited to participate as a team. These teams were composed of the superintendent of the school district, the district Community Education coordinator, a building principal, and a building level director.

The four aforementioned classifications of Community Education administrators were homogeneously grouped and then subdivided into sub-groups of approximately eight in number. With the aid of a process facilitator, group leader, and recorder, each group of eight developed a list of critical tasks and competencies needed in the development and administration of Community Education programs. After consensus was reached in the subgroup, the groups met and consolidated their work, based upon the perceptions of the total group--statements were consolidated, omissions identified, and some editing completed.

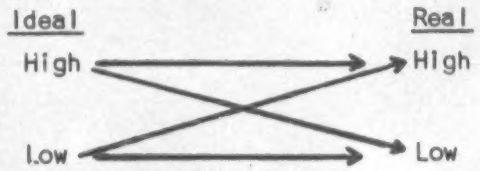
Phase II

Following the first workshop activity, the lists of competencies were submitted to review using a panel method. These panels consisted of four administrators from each of the four roles of Community Education administrators. This activity in Workshop No. 2 provided a final consolidation and editing of the competency statements. Subsequent to the "fine-tuning" function each of the original 68 administrator participants will be asked to rate the competency statements using three scales: importance, level of competence needed, and where the competency is typically attained.

Ratings will be obtained through a mail survey, the data collected will be subjected to the Quadrant Assessment Model (QAM)* program to determine if each statement is of high or low priority in the "ideal" for each role and in the "actual" for each respondent. The Quadrant Assessment Model is designed to

*Quadrant Assessment Model (QAM) for the Assessment of Competencies, by Gaston Pol and Lloyd McCleary, Notebook.

to compare perceptions in a logical way. The Model can be shown in schematic form:



For each sub-group of the sample an index of importance is determined by a ranking of mean scores of each competency statement. An index of Consensus is determined by use of the standard deviation of the response scores for each competency statement. Using both indices, a set of competencies rated High Ideal, Low Ideal, High Real and Low Real were determined as judged by each group of the sample. A W-correlation of Concordance is used to screen statements within each of the four categories--this procedure is described here, but it permits the identification of degree of agreement among subgroups for the placement of statements in a particular category.

Four sets of relationships are considered useful and these are indicated in a particular category.

High Ideal - High Real statements are assumed to mean that the competency implied by the statement is important and that practitioners do, in fact, possess that competency. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that competencies rated in the High Ideal-High Real quadrant need to be given high priority in the planning of pre-service programs.

High Ideal - Low Real statements will be assumed to mean that the competency implied by the statement is important and that practitioners generally do not possess that competency. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that competencies rated in the High Ideal-Low Real quadrant need to be given high priority in the in-service education of administrators and that consideration should be given to them in planning pre-service programs.

Low Ideal - High Real statements will be assumed to mean that the competencies implied are of low importance but were likely to be over-emphasized in practice. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that these competencies should be given low priority in the in-service education of administrators and that programs of training should be examined in terms of the emphasis given them.

Low Real - Low Ideal statements are assumed to mean that the competencies implied are of little importance and were not being overemphasized by the practitioner.

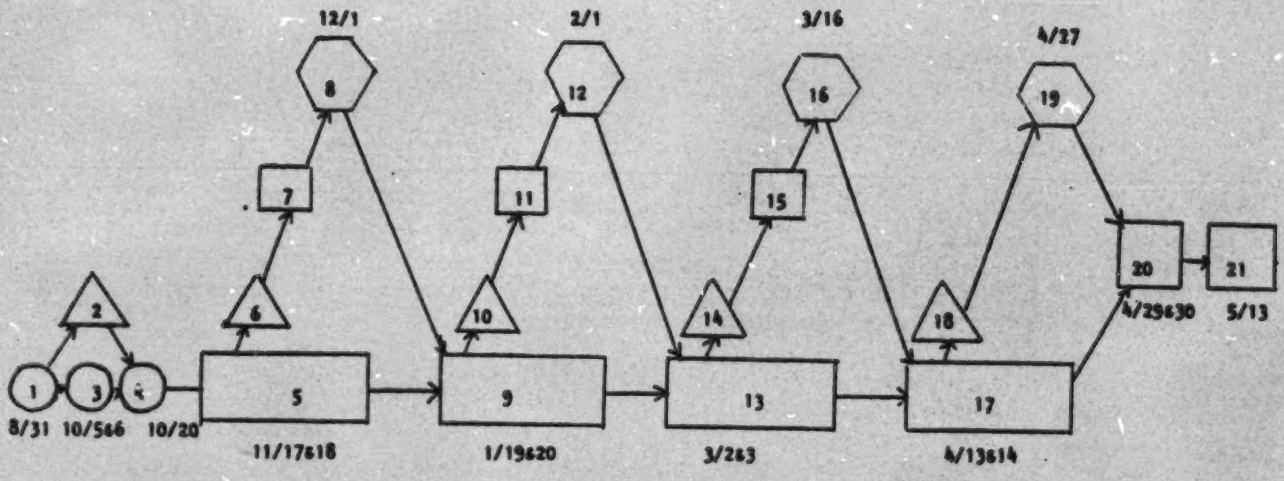
Phase III Workshop

In April of 1977, all 68 participants will reconvene to examine the product of their work and complete a self-assessment instrument. A final evaluation of the instrument will follow the self-assessment exercise. During this third workshop, participants will also be requested to (1) assign indicators to the competency statements and (2) generate plans for future developmental work.

Final Activities

A final evaluation of this instrument will then be conducted by Arizona

PROJECT FLOW CHART



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	PLACE	SESSIONS	PARTICIPANTS
August 31	First Planning Session	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	2:00-4:00	10
October 5,6	Second Planning Session	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	7-10:00 p.m. 8-5:00	6
October 20	Third Planning Session Mailing of Invitations	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	10:00-12:00	5
Nov. 17,18	First Workshop	Casa Blanca Inn	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	68
Dec. 1	Mailing of Proceedings of first workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jan. 19,20	Second Workshop	Sunburst Hotel	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	25
February 1	Mailing of Proceedings of second workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
March 2,3	Third Workshop	Site to be announced	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	68
March 16	Mailing of Proceedings of third workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 13,14	Fourth Workshop	Site to be announced		
April 27	Mailing of final document of competencies needed in Community Education	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 29,30	Final Evaluation of Grant			
May 13	Mailing of Evaluation	n/a	n/a	na/

epartment of Education personnel and university personnel from the University of Utah and Arizona State University in a fourth and final session. The main thrust of this session will be to generate a final project report.

Significance of the Study

Aside from the overt benefit of causing some 68 schools administrators to reflect deeply on what they are about in their work, there are some important implications for this work that are of interest to the practitioner and administrator alike.

Assessment Function: It is only as we ascertain where we are that we might move forward in sophisticaion and effectiveness as community school administrators. Because the various descriptions of Community Education administrative positions are relatively new, we have, as yet, little to aid administrators of Community Education programs in knowing when they are on productive courses and involved in meaningful tasks in their work. The data from this effort will provide both empirical evidence and a procedure to clarify roles and permit meaningful evaluation of performance.

Certification: The exciting possibility exists that state certification requirements for administrators of Community Education programs (undeveloped to date) can be based on a competency assessment model, versus the traditional method of credentialing. Using this model, administrators of Community Education programs could be licensed, based on real and measurable skills, as opposed to evidence of courses taken that may or may not reflect the acquisition of needed competencies.

Program Evaluation Function: Additionally, an outgrowth of this project is the development of procedures that will permit the examination of relationships between administrative performance and program output variables, such as student achievement and school climate.

College Curriculum Function: Finally, the Community Education trainers who formally participate in the C. S. Mott Foundation Community Education network in the United States will benefit from the study. The data derived from this study, and future work, will allow these and other institutions of higher learning to modify instructional strategies so that they speak to the development of needed competencies in Community Education. This is worthwhile outcome for those engaged in the preparation of administrators of Community Education programs.

Summary: The Arizona State University Competencies Assessment Project promises to be of interest to scholars and practitioners alike. As the project moves toward more rational training and evaluation models, data such as that provided by this project will be essential. As final results become available in late spring of 1977, the Southwest Regional Center, through a final report in the Notebook and upon private request, will make those results available.

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ON-THE-JOB LEARNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE: A RESPONSE TO BROWN'S MODEL

William D. Greenfield, Syracuse University

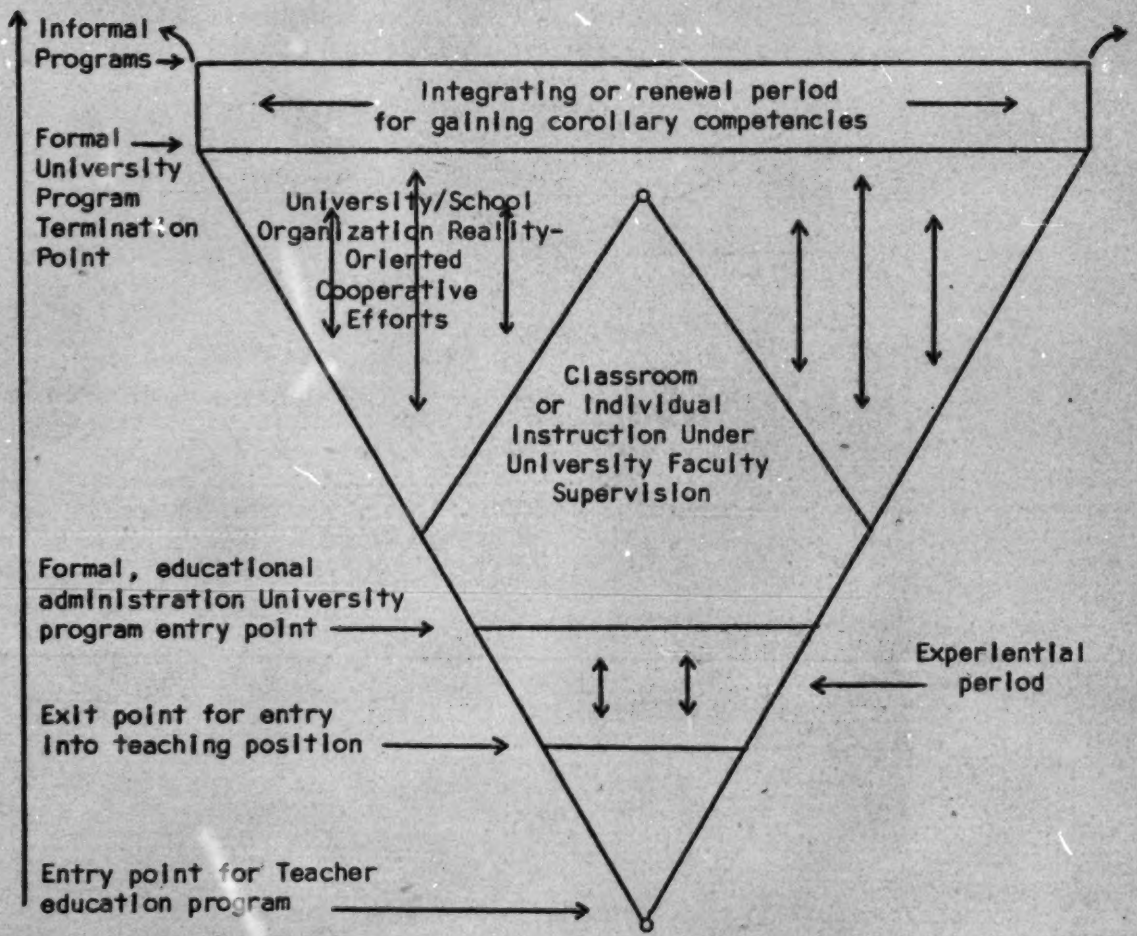
The February 1976 issue included an article by Thomas Brown entitled "Interrelating Inservice Education to Preparation Programs." The comments which follow attempt to build upon his observations by highlighting two "misconceptions" implicit in the University/School Organization Corollary Competencies Model he proposed (Figure 1). Figure 2 reflects an altered configuration of the sequential learning experiences which Brown suggests are common in the training of administrators. Two of the points at which our views differ concern (1) the experiential period prior to entering a formal administrator training program and (2) the integrating/renewal period following the formal university program termination point. (An assumption implicit in Brown's Model, and I believe it is erroneous although I do not address it here, is that most graduate students are engaged in full-time rather than part-time study.) While it has been argued elsewhere that shifting the focus and the locus of preparation programs from university to field and theory to practice will not result in the expected increase in competency among educational administrators,[1] that is not my focus here. Rather, it is to point out that both the more traditional and the emerging competency-based training programs continue to overlook the rich informal learning which occurs <u>both before and after formal administrator training</u>. In doing so, training and renewal programs are designed and operated in a manner which ignores what individuals may have learned informally through their initial on-the-job experiences as a teacher, and later as a result of their experience in the administrative role. Pre-service and renewal training programs which ignore what teachers and administrators have gleaned from these organizational experiences will surely be less effective than more informed programs.

As Figure 2 suggests, the renewal period and the experiential periods (those just before and after formal university training in educational administration) are broadening learning situations, rather than narrow or static. In Figure 1, there is an implicit assumption that the transition from the experiential period to the formal training period is broadening. I would argue that this runs counter to the conception of most students who are likely to view this transition as a rather limiting, perhaps even stifling, period in their lives. While it can be argued that advanced training ought to be of a broadening and more general nature, the history of professional training in Schools of Education is that it has become increasingly specialized in most fields, including educational administration. Thus, as I have tried to depict in Figure 2, the transition to formal training programs amounts to a focusing, a narrowing down from the "blooming buzzing confusion" of the teachers' and administrators' work-world.

The opposite is true upon leaving the formal university training program. The renewal period is not static as is suggested by Figure 1. Rather, as in Figure 2, it is once again an opportunity for individuals to broaden the scope of their experience beyond the specialized and protected confines of inquiry characteristic of the university program. Indeed, this has already been alluded to in Brown's model when he suggests in Figure 1 the broadening effect of university/school organization reality-oriented cooperative efforts. However, the broadening (acquiring corollary competencies) does not stop upon completion of the cooperative, field-based training experience. Instead, as one

FIGURE I

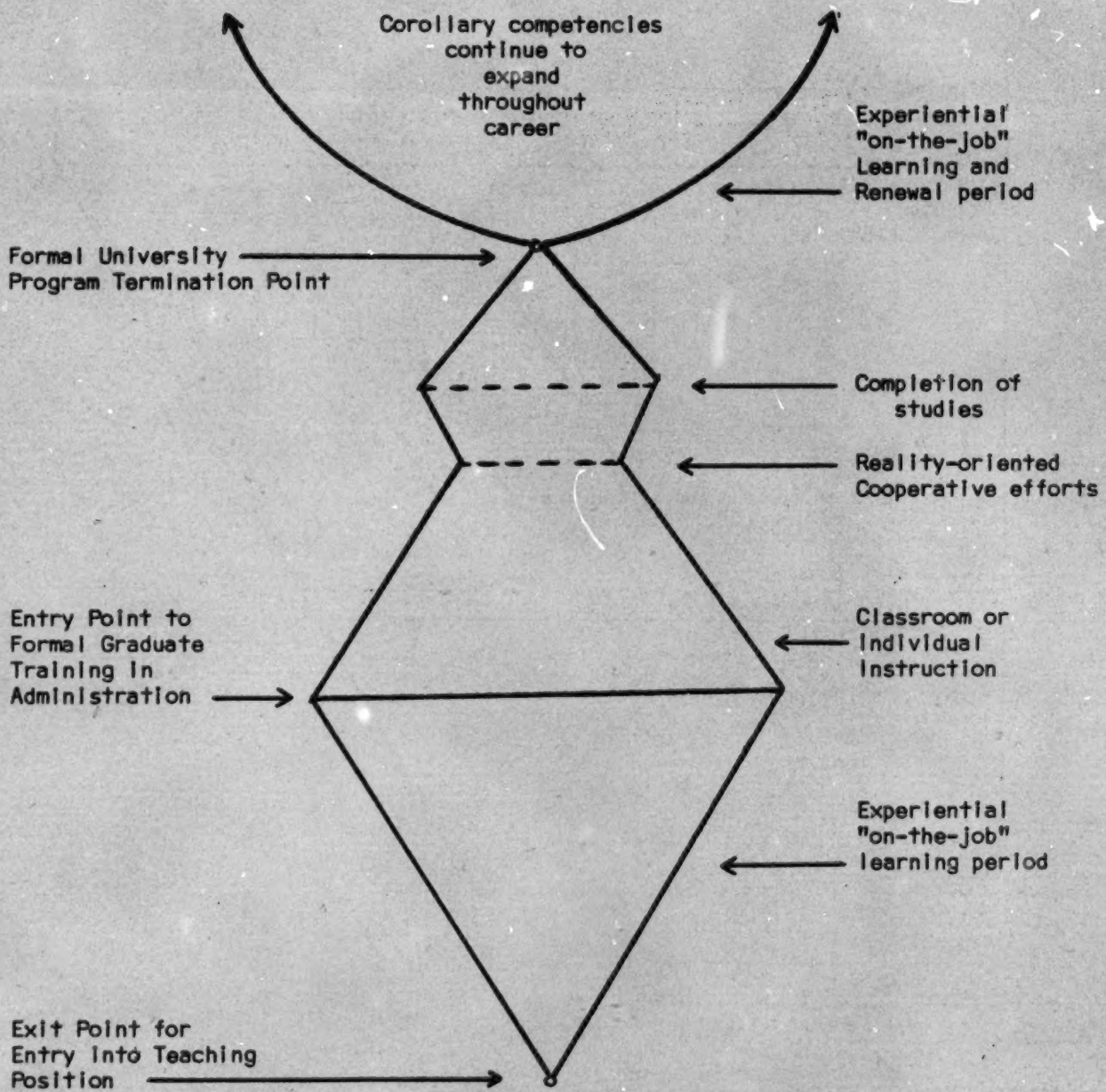
UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL ORGANIZATION
COROLLARY COMPETENCIES MODEL


Informal Programs
Integrating or renewal period for gaining corollary competencies
Formal University Program Termination Point
University/School Organization Reality-Oriented Cooperative Efforts
Classroom or Individual Instruction Under University Faculty Supervision
Formal, educational administration University program entry point
Experiential period
Exit point for entry into teaching position
Entry point for Teacher education program

SOURCE: Thomas Brown, "Inter-relating In-service Education to Preparation Programs" CCBC Notebook (No. 2, Vol. 5, February, 1976) p. 9.

FIGURE 2

ON-THE-JOB LEARNING AND
GRADUATE TRAINING IN ADMINISTRATION


Corollary competencies continue to expand throughout career
Experiential "on-the-job" Learning and Renewal period
Formal University Program Termination Point
Completion of studies
Reality-oriented Cooperative efforts
Entry Point to Formal Graduate Training in Administration
Classroom or Individual Instruction
Experiential "on-the-job" learning period
Exit Point for Entry into Teaching Position

engages the world of work, one probably continues to learn and broaden one's practice base as long as one is active in that setting. Things do not remain constant. Rather, as is suggested by Figure 2, individuals and the reality they engage are in continuous flux.

While these may seem like only minor criticisms related to the "cosmetics" of constructing a figure one way or another (Figure 1 versus Figure 2), they evolve instead out of concern that we make an error in the way we think of the professional training of school administrators.

Administrator training programs, and those designed upon a performance/competency-based model are no exception, pay little if any attention to the informal learning experiences which occur both before and after formal university training. The social science literature[2] is replete with research about the informal learning which occurs on the job as a result of processes like anticipatory[3] and organizational[4] socialization. Proponents of performance competency-based professional training programs would do well to familiarize themselves with what is knownabout these and related phenomena concerning the socialization of adults in complex organizational settings.[5]

Notes

1. William D. Greenfield, Jr. "Organizational Socialization and the Preparation of Educational Administrators." UCEA Review (July, 1975), pp. 21-25.

2. See, for example, David A. Goslin, editor, Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research. Chicago, Rand McNally, 1969.

3. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, 3rd ed. New York, The Free Press, 1968.

4. Edgar H. Schein "The Individual, the Organization and the Career: A Conceptual Scheme" Psychology: A Book of Readings edited by David A. Klob, Irwin M. Rubin, and James M. McIntyre. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974, pp. 333-348.

5. Orville G. Brim, Jr. and Stanton Wheeler, Socialization After Childhood: Two Essays. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969.

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THE CASE FOR COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION,

NCPEA, AUGUST 1976

Robert Larson, The University of Vermont

At the outset let me say that my willingness to take the positive view of competency based instruction (CBI) is grounded in how I define it and the term "personalize". The two are not always mutually supportive. Much of the ferment in our field over competency based education (CBE) is stirred by some disparate definitions which are rooted either in the stimulus - response school of the behaviorists or gestalt - field theory or third - force psychology. I see CBE as a compatible bed fellow with personalized or humanistic education. The competency approach need not be at the purely didactic level, but can indeed have

a heuristic and, what Broudy calls, a philetic focus (the latter emphasizing the emotional aspects of student growth or what is often referred to as the affective domain).

As I see it, personalize and humanize are interchangeable terms although the latter has become more refined in the literature. Schmieder, one of the most prolific writers on competency based teacher education, defines personalized instruction as follows:

> "Instruction which is designed to meet specific needs of learners. Education is personalized when assessment, objectives, strategies, and evaluation are planned with the learners and tailored to the learners individual needs, level, rate, value and choices."[1]

The most complete definition of "humanized" or "humanistic" which I have found and to which I am committed is provided by Schmuck and Schmuck.

> "Humanized schools, as we see them, are those where the environment sets the stage for successful personal encounters; where ideas, facts, and feelings are openly expressed; where conflict is brought out into the open, discussed, and worked on: where emotions share equal prominence with the intellect and where learning activities integrate the personal interests of students and the learning goals of the school."[2]

Note that these authors carry the concept far beyond the goal of "meeting the specific needs of learners". There are significant additions of personal encounter, conflict, and emotion, all of which are melded with the goals of the organization. This last dimension serves to place considerable responsibility on us as professors to insure that our organizations do not become unbending and arbitrary in their relationships with students. Institutional requirements are not sacred variables - they should be subject to modification and manipulation.

As far as competency based instruction is concerned, there is a considerable range of definitions bandied about. Demonstration of the wide spread of views as to what competency based is, is shown in a study conducted by Metzger and Demeke. They found, in examining past and present views of CBE administrative preparation, that the definitions ranged from "Competency is a degree of quality behavior", to "Competencies are the smallest units of behavior that, if employed at quality level, will make a difference in fulfillment of responsibility".[3] In the field of teacher education, CBE is often defined "...as one which specifies objectives in explicit form and holds prospective teachers accountable for meeting them. Teacher competencies and measures for evaluating them are specified and made known in advance of instruction".[4]

I need to clarify the sometimes vague and confusing usage of competence and competency. My intent is not to engage in nitpicking but I see an important distinction. Competence is the minimum knowledge, skills, values, and/or attitudes a person can be certified to possess based on a set of criteria or level of expectation.

> "Competence can be measured only through an accumulation of evidence, over time, that an individual is able to apply knowledge and perform certain functions or skills in ways which

> are, more often than not, perceived positively by both the individual and his audiences. A person is not competent because of what he knows, does, or feels; he is competent, when what he knows, does, or feels is evaluated as being positive in its results and is part of his consistent behavior as a human being."[5]

This, then is the more long range, futures conception of the term.

Competency, on the other hand, is more singular, more immediate, and more focused in its application. It is the achievement of the knowledge, skills, values, and/or attitudes necessary to satisfactorily perform a particular task. (italics mine).

> The idea of competency is intimately involved with the ideas of participation, authority, responsibility, and community. The world competency refers to skills and abilities. Its Latin root is competere, to strive together from which modern usuage also gets the world compete. The meaning of competency is bound up in the notion of being properly or well qualified. A properly qualified person is one who, for a specific set of activities, is deemed by his peers to possess those skills and abilities appropriate to the function of role.[6]

These definitions, then are consistent with my view of personalized or humanistic education and my beliefs about the nature of man.

How can the competency approach "personalize the administrator"? As I have pondered these questions, what emerged were the two focal areas of "impact on professors and programs" and "impact on students". This array of positive dimensions is not proported to be "pure" in that there is certainly linkage between items on each list - items which, incidentally, are not rank ordered. I would add the caveat that the emphasis of what follows is on processes and practices for program development.

Impact on Professors and Programs

1. If the competency approach is to be used successfully, programs must be developed in the most precise definition of the term. A program is a set of goals, objectives, and activities which interact to form a cluster of related educational experiences. Rather than a program being built mainly on professorial whims and interests, which can result in a conglomerate of relatively unrelated experiences for students, a systematically designed program, spinning off of the competency approach, can be much more rationally and holistically developed. As one researcher has put it, "...when a college as a whole (or large sub-unit of a university) decides to implement a competency program or curricula that leads to a degree, there must be a readiness for a complete rethinking of institutional practice."

If competencies are spelled out to a high degree, then the program must assume responsibility for providing the experiences through which students can gain these competencies. Considerable efforts have to be made by a faculty to go through the planning cycle ranging from needs assessment through establishment of goals and objectives and program components to the eventual development of more effective evaluation procedures. Anyone who has been a consistent consumer of the CCBC Notebook since its inception in October 1971, would have to

be impressed by the programmatic efforts made by various institutions around the country utilizing the competency approach.

2. The development of competencies demands a much greater "mind set" and expenditure of energy in order to not only identify initial competencies, but to design a process whereby these competencies are continually updated for "relevance". If competencies are to be relevant, professors must draw on more resources than themselves in order to identify them. A cross sectional approach which relies on input from faculty, students, and the field is essential if valid competencies are to be specified. Certainly a by-product of this validation process is that of developing more dialogue with the field, an eternal problem for most administration departments.

3. Programs are forced by the competency approach to develop alternative methodologies for facilitating student learning. While the course approach is still appropriate, other means of instruction are demanded in order to provide alternative routes for learning. Consequently, what we have seen is that time is viewed as a variable and not a constant under the competency approach, with the result that methodologies ranging from scenarios to simulations are being rediscovered or developed all around the country.[7]

4. How do adults learn? Are there characteristics of adults as learners which are different from those of children and youth? One of the most stimulating aspects of preparing this paper was getting into some of the literature on adult education. For many years, intuition has told me that adults differ from young people in terms of how they learn. As Knowles points out, we need a new theory of andragogy which is the art and science of helping adults learn as compared to the traditional reliance on pedagogy which is the art and science of teaching children. Let me give some examples of what he means. As we mature, we normally move toward being more self directed persons. Adults want to make their own decisions, face consequences, and manage their own lives. Education is usually accumulated in a subject matter fashion. Adults tend to have a perspective of immediacy of application. Education is viewed from a problem centered stance.

5. What are our assumptions about learning? This item relates to the above, but gets into more detail in terms of teaching methodologies. What model(s) of teaching do we select as the most appropriate one to facilitate the kind of learning climate which we feel is most appropriate for our students? A model ...is a pattern or plan, which can be used to shape a curriculum or course, to select instructional materials, and to guide a teacher's action.[8] As professors, we need to develop our repertoire of approaches to teaching and learning, for, as Joyce and Weil state, there is little evidence to date which would indicate that there is a single most reliable teaching strategy to be used with all students. We need a consistent philosophy to help us work effectively with students in a truly helping way.

6. CBE, if it is grounded in the kind of personal philosophy described previously in the introduction to this paper, can enable a professor to truly engage in a helping relationship with his students. We will begin to see ourselves as instruments for learning rather than relying primarily on the "right method". We will begin to recognize that the behavior of ourselves and of our students is primarily a function of the perceptions we hold at a certain moment in time, and that what is significant is not whether these perceptions are right or wrong, but that they are reality for us at that juncture of activity.

7. CBE has great potential to further the use of an R & D methodology in our field. The systematic process which could be used in developing a competency based program is ready made for carrying the earlier work of people such as Graff and Street much further in its refinement. There is considerable challenge ahead in finding ways to integrate more effectively the R & D methodology with the theory based movement.[9]

8. The competency approach provokes innumerable questions even if we don't have the answers. To me this has been one of the most important by-products of our attempts to utilize it at the University of Vermont. A few of the questions we are confronting are: (1) Should we provide alternative routes to CBE for students who have little field experience or who are not ready to assume considerable responsibility for their own learning?; (2) How much structure should we provide and what are the minimum competencies we can expect a student to gain from his program?; (3) What are valid indicators of competence?; (4) Can or should all learnings be linked with competence per se? Might we emphasize competence to the detriment of what a person is?; (5) Is it possible that there are outcomes from using the CBE that are as valuable as the competencies themselves?; (6) Is all our effort making any difference on the operation of schools which hire our graduates?

Impact on Students

1. When students enter a program under a competency approach, they know much more clearly what a program has to offer them and can more systematically determine their personal learning needs. A validated competency list can be extremely helpful as a guidance mechanism for selecting learning experiences. The "ambiguity" which so often surrounds some programs as far as what specific learnings a person can get from them and the bases for subsequent evaluation, is largely removed with the use of CBE.

Rather than finding himself fitting into a rigid, pre-determined program, a student knows that he can have much more impact on the design of his own program than he could under a traditional one. For example, I remember quite clearly the general M.Ed. in administration which was offered in the University of Vermont when I came there in 1968. A list of ten courses was handed to the student and that was the program. There is much more freedom of choice under this approach where a student can define many of his objectives, determine how to achieve them, and relate these objectives to his personal needs. Such freedom of action is in keeping with one of the major characteristics of what Argyris and Schon refer to as a Model II theory-in-use of professional development, which they see as increasing student growth, learning, and effectiveness.[10]

2. With freedom of choice comes responsibility. Responsibility is central to a personalized or humanistic view of education. One of the major impacts which a CBE can have is to increase responsibility for one's learning and to enhance one's autonomy and sense of personal direction. This feature of choice is a key building block to competency based instruction.

If a program has as an integral component the possibilities of setting personal goals and choosing alternative learning modes, it will be very much in keeping with the thrust of the "futures" literature of recent years. This material points out that our culture and society are changing so rapidly that we can no longer assume that what we learn in our youth will remain valid for the rest of our lives. Whatever competence means today, we can be sure its

meaning will have changed by tomorrow. The foundation for future professional competence seems to be the capacity to learn how to learn. We must truly learn to invent our own futures, and to engage in more effective long range planning.

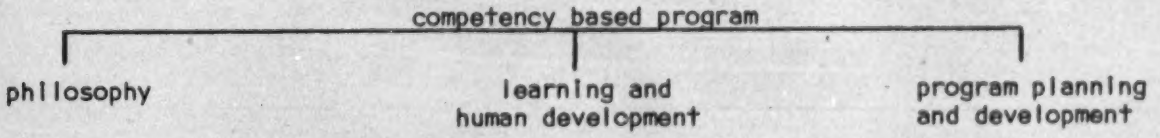
3. Feedback is recognized increasingly as a critical dimension of the educational process. Research over the past two decades substantiates this observation. To become competent one must be able to reflect on his actions in order to learn from them. Reflection demands data which usually comes from feedback. A central characteristic of feedback is specificity which is also a central characteristic of CBE. Under this mode of instruction, student learning has a much greater chance of being enhanced than it does under more traditional educational models.

4. Students can utilize the competency approach either for preservice or inservice purposes.

5. Because of the more explicit articulation of competencies and because a competency program is more situation-specific in its orientation, a student can be assured of a better match between his capabilities and the needs of a current or potential job. I am continually distressed by the gross mismatches which I observe in the hiring process. It would appear that the use of the competency concept could help immeasurably to improve the "fit" between the individual and the organization.

Conclusion

Conceptually, the CBE development can be portrayed as falling into three broad components which interface to provide a foundation for CBE program development.



A great challenge for any of us who are interested in CBE is to research and test further the "mix" of these components as we search for ways to improve the education of our students. The impediments are formidable - it will be very easy to sit back and say it is impossible to act. Academic arguments can go on and on over the difficulty of proving that achieved competence makes a difference on job performance or that identified competencies are not necessarily valid, etc. There is a strong norm in our institutions not to act until every question can be answered in the most precise way. I submit that if we are serious about improving our programs and truly attempting to personalize the preparation or renewal of administrators the competency based approach can be used to achieve some of these goals.

Notes

1. Allen Schmieder, Competency Based Education: The State of Scene (Washington D. C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1973), p. 64.

2. Richard A. Schmuck and Patricia A. Schmuck, A Humanistic Psychology of Education: Making the School Everybody's House (Palo Alto: National Press Books, 1974), p. x.

3. Christa Metzger and Howard Demeke, "A Comparison of Competency Based Approaches in Educational Administration," CCBC Notebook: The Competency Based Curriculum, Vol. 4, No. 2 (February 1975, The University of Utah), 8.

4. Phyllis D. Hamilton, Competency Based Teacher Education (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, ERIC Research Report No. 7, 1975), p. 9.

5. Edgar A. Kelley et al, "Planning Preparation Programs," Continuing the Search: Preservice and Inservice Education (Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1975), p. 11.

6. Warren L. Ziegler, Planning As Action: Techniques of Inventive Planning Workshops, A Working Draft (Syracuse: Educational Policy Research Center, 1972), p. 16.

7. Lloyd E. McCleary and Kenneth E. McIntyre, "Competency Development and Unviersity Methodology," Where Will They Find It?: Preservice and Continuing Education (Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1972) pp. 53-68.

8. Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, Models of Teaching (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 3.

9. Lloyd E. McCleary, "The Theory Based Movement: Inhibitor to Development?", CCBC Notebook Vol. 5, No. 2 (February, 1976), 2-3; letter from McCleary

10. Argyris and Schon, pp. 85-95. This text introduces the reader to some very unique and useful concepts and ideas regarding the education of professional personnel for any organization. There is considerable reference to competence and methodology for adult education, which melds the text quite nicely with Knowles' work on andragogy.

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THE CASE AGAINST COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION,

NCPEA, AUGUST 1976

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of The City University of New York

Whenever competency based education (CBE) is attacked for its demonstrated faults and failures, its defenders nearly always respond by owning up to its difficulties but by adding: "It doesn't have to be that way." I would agree with my colleagues that it doesn't have to be that way; but I would further add: "It probably will be."

There is some dispute regarding who the real parents of CBE are. Certainly, as both its advocates and critics acknowledge, the concept of CBE is not a new one; its ideological ancestors go back many years to include a potpourri of educational thinkers and activists. But its current life is traced most often to societal reaction against substandard public school education and the demand that schools provide students with the necessary equipment (variously interpreted) to function in the "real world." The state, which has mandated competency

based programs, is most generally seen as the midwife in this analogy.

While I don't disagree with the facts used to support this analogy, I would like to amend the analogy to more faithfully fit those facts. The state, I believe, fits much better into the analogy as the parent rather than the midwife. State governments have given much closer guidance and direction (and occasionally sustenance) to their mandated competency based programs than would be either expected or tolerated from midwives. Furthermore, state mandated competency based programs bear much closer resemblance to their natural parents, the state bureaucracies, than they do to the basic demands of society. Most of the limitations of CBE cited in this paper also seem to be inherent limitations of state legislatures and the bureaus and programs which they spawn.

Oversimplification and overspecification are among the most common criticisms of CBE. Nearly everyone who has been involved in developing a competency based program in education realizes by the time he has listed his 200th competency that he has just begun on the task of specifying in observable terms all the competencies which he would like the educator who emerges from his program to have. Furthermore, by this point in his efforts he has begun to develop the nagging doubt that his list of competencies, if and when completed, will add up to a suitable definition of the professional educator he would like to produce. As pointed out by Harry S. Broudy, it is extremely tenuous to assume in specification of competencies that the whole is the sum of its parts.[1] This is particularly true if all the specified parts must be observable.[2]

Closely related to the problems of oversimplification and overspecification of competencies are the difficulties which are encountered in the assessment of competencies. Of all the components of CBE, assessment has been slowest in developing. The True Believers of CBE have noted the grave danger of limiting assessment to the lowest levels of the cognitive domain where extensive specification is possible and have regularly called for the development of reliable, valid measures of performance in the higher cognitive levels and in the affective domain. But such measures still have not been comprehensively developed, and there is little evidence that they will be comprehensively developed in the near future.

Probably the brightest prospect in the CBE assessment picture is the emergence of comprehensive assessment systems which look at molar complexes of behaviors in the performance of competency related tasks. The assessment system developed by the Special Education Supervisor Training Project at the University of Texas exemplifies this approach. But it is not at all clear that such an approach will be generally accepted by State Education Departments which have mandated competency programs. The State of New York, in mandating competency based programs for the preparation of professional educators, has avowed that the particular operational modes of such programs are to be the products of individual college and university efforts and, accordingly, has persistently refused to supply universities with explicit guidelines for program development. Nevertheless, the Queens College program in School Administration and Supervision, which was patterned closely after the University of Texas model, was accepted "with reservation" by the State of New York because of its lack of specificity in assessment, while programs that have been held up as exemplars have been built upon lengthy lists of specific but trivial assessment procedures. Bureaucracies depend heavily upon simplistically defined

interchangeable parts and will sacrifice nearly all other values to maintain them. Competencies mandated by bureaucratic arms of the state government cannot deny their parentage.

CBE has gained much of its support from its promise to guarantee that all certified professional educators possess a minimum set of competencies. In other words, it attempts to establish a floor beneath which professional performance should never slip. In practice, however, the floor has become a ceiling. Few CBE programs are equipped to provide the prospective professional with training beyond this minimum level. Nor do most of them think in this direction. Once again, CBE advocates will maintain that this isn't necessarily so. And some of the better programs have indeed made it both possible and likely that their students will aspire beyond the minimum level needed for program completion or certification. But in doing so they have, without exception to my knowledge, been forced to abandon the essentials of the competency based mode. In other words, if it is possible to bring some students to a higher level of specified competency, shouldn't all students be brought to that level? Or, if a competency based program is designed to give all students what is necessary, what is the purpose of giving some students more than is necessary?

Which brings us upon another central difficulty of CBE: Who determines what are the necessary competencies for the practitioner? Or, put another way: How are the necessary competencies validated? Most generally, in answering these questions, State Education Departments and the programs they foster seek to determine both the highest expectations currently held for the practitioner and the best recognized means for achieving them. Then their CBE programs are built around those expectations. A few CBE programs have attempted to define what a proactive professional should do within a complex, changing environment; but these programs are clearly in the minority. Furthermore, such attempts are likely to be discouraged by State Education Departments who prefer professionals who have a concept of what "ought to be" that is politically safe. CBE programs tend to become tied to current expectations and practice.

Finally, CBE programs tend to be a dead end for the individual who passes through them. A preparation program that develops an individual in terms of specified competencies that are demonstrated by observable performances that are judged by the standard of current practice is probably engaged, as Broudy has pointed out,[3] in apprentice training rather than professional education. I'm sure that a good case could be made for the desirability of competent journeymen while we think we're developing good professionals, in a short while we will find that we have neither. School needs and environments change more rapidly than pipe fittings do.

At this point the CBE advocate will again say: "It doesn't have to be that way." To which I will again reply: "But it probably will be." Most of the problems I've pointed to in this paper are most likely to be true when CBE programs have been mandated by the state. I do believe that there is a genuine opportunity for universities which seek to develop CBE programs without having to do so to comply with State fiat. Competencies can provide much direction; systematic observable performances can certainly lend reliability to judgments. If no educator is ever judged in terms of his performance on competency standards, the introspective process, which must be undertaken in the attempt to build a competency based program, may still have a salutary effect by providing direction for the faculty. There is real hope here.

But even CBE programs which emerge without a mandate from the state are not immune to the dangers described above. Gresham's Law in Economics states: "Bad money drives out good money." A similar principle may apply in terms of CBE program development. The proliferation of trivial programs makes it difficult for good ones to exist.

NOTES

1. Harry S. Broudy, A Critique of Performance-Based Teacher Education (Washington, D. C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, May, 1972.)

2. Broudy, "CBTE/PBTE -- Do They Mean What They Say?" in Upheaval in Teacher Education: The Regents Master Plan, The Twenty-Second Annual Teacher Education Conference sponsored by the Office of Teacher Education of The City University of New York, March 23, 1973.

3. Broudy, A Critique of Performance-Based Teacher Education.

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